

# ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

## DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES



### NEWS RELEASE

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### Prince William Sound Salmon Fishery News Release #21

**SEINE FISHERIES:** An aerial survey of the Eastern, Northern and Southeastern districts is scheduled for this afternoon. Early season indicators of wild stock chum and pink salmon run entry and escapement in the Northern, Eastern, and Southeastern districts do not support a wild stock fishery at this time. VFDA is in the process of conducting cost recovery for pink salmon in Port Valdez. VFDA reports that pink salmon harvest on Saturday, July 7 was approximately 116,600 fish with an average weight of approximately 4.8 pounds per fish and 35% female. The CPF harvest estimate from the 14-hour period in the Eastern District on Sunday, July 8 is not available at the time of this announcement. However, it is estimated that 1.5 to 2 million pink salmon were harvested in the Eastern District on Sunday, July 8. ADF&G sampling of CPF pink salmon harvested from The Solomon Gulch Hatchery Special Harvest Area on July 8 resulted in an estimated sex ratio of 22% female. ADF&G sampling of CPF pink salmon harvested from Valdez Arm and Port Valdez (mixed sample) on July 8 resulted in an estimated sex ratio of 32% female. Cumulative VFDA cost recovery is 3.6 million pounds through July 7, or 83% of a final goal of 4.4 million pounds.

**EASTERN DISTRICT:** Waters in the Eastern District, north of a line from 61° 02.855'N., 146° 44.204'W. to 61° 02.373'N., 146° 43.407'W. to 61° 02.992'N., 146° 39.165'W., will open to commercial fishing for 14 hours on Tuesday, July 10 beginning at 6:00 am. Waters of Port Valdez east of 146° 23.00' W. longitude will be closed to commercial fishing during this period. Regulatory closed waters and anadromous stream closures north of a line from Potato Point to Entrance Point **will not be in effect** during this fishing period. Area at the head of Port Valdez is being restricted at this time to allow for the completion of cost recovery and to allow for broodstock collection. Area in Valdez Arm is being restricted for this period to allow for wild stock escapement in Galena, Sawmill and Jack bays. Time and area for the next commercial fishing period will be based on wild stock escapement indices, cost recovery progress, harvest results from the July 10 fishery, and consideration for broodstock collection progress.

As a reminder, **all salmon that are harvested but not sold by commercial permit holders in Alaska waters must be reported on a fish ticket at the time of landing** (5AAC 39.130(c)(10)). Fish tickets have a "not sold/personal use" field to report these salmon.

**The next scheduled PURSE SEINE salmon fisheries announcement is anticipated to be at 2:00 pm Wednesday, July 11. The next scheduled GILLNET salmon fisheries announcement is anticipated to be at 2:00 pm Wednesday, July 11.**

Permit holders are advised that unscheduled announcements based on current escapement data may occur at any time inseason either establishing an additional period or extending an open period.

Announcement recordings are available for **gillnet fisheries at 907-424-7535 and seine fisheries at 907-424-7345. In addition, announcement recordings are available in Anchorage at 267-2843.**

Additionally, announcements, inseason harvest data, and escapement data are available at the following web addresses:

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=commercialbyareacopperriver.main> (Copper River homepage) or

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=commercialbyareapws.main> (Prince William Sound homepage).

Unless otherwise specified, all openings are clock openings based on Alaska Daylight Time, which is based on Coordinated Universal Time and may be obtained by calling 303-499-7111.

The department encourages commercial permit holders to renew their licenses early and to check their CFEC vessel registration stickers to make sure that they are current.

The department also encourages permit holders to report observed violations to Wildlife Safeguard at 800-478-3377. Reports are anonymous and cash rewards may be paid for successful prosecution of violations.

PWS commercial fishers are reminded that area fisheries often necessitate fishing in close proximity to marine mammals. Under the Marine Mammals Protection Act (MMPA), the PWS drift gillnet fishery is classified as a Category II fishery. Participants in Category I

and II fisheries must be registered in the Marine Mammal Avoidance Program (MMAP) to be authorized for lawful incidental, but not intentional, marine mammal takes during fishing. However, this authorization explicitly does **not** exempt holders of commercial fishing permits from the MMPA prohibition on takes of marine mammals listed as endangered or threatened under the Endangered Species Act. As a participant in the PWS drift gillnet fishery you are automatically registered in the Marine Mammal Authorization Program (MMAP) by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). As a participant in a Category II fishery, you must:

- Maintain an MMAP Authorization Certificate, or a photocopy, on board the vessel while engaging in any of the fisheries identified on the reverse side of the certificate. For non-vessel or set net fisheries, the enclosed Certificate, or a photocopy, must be in the possession of the permit holder during fishing operations. This Certificate, in combination with a current, valid state or Federal fishing permit, will serve as your authorization to incidentally take non-endangered or non-threatened marine mammals in the course of commercial fishing operations.
- Report all injuries and mortalities of marine mammals within 48 hours of returning from the trip during which these takes occurred using the MMAP Mortality/Injury Reporting Form (visit [http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/pdfs/interactions/mmap\\_reporting\\_form.pdf](http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/pdfs/interactions/mmap_reporting_form.pdf) for a copy).
- If so requested, take an observer aboard your vessel.

Purse seine and set gillnet gear are classified as a category III fisheries under the MMPA. Category III fishery participants are automatically exempted from the incidental take prohibition in the MMPA. Therefore, you do not need to maintain the MMAP certificate aboard your vessel, but must report any incidental takes of marine mammals within 48 hours of the incident or your return to port. Such reports must be made on the Marine Mammals Authorization Program Mortality/Injury Reporting Form.

Because some marine mammals are also listed under the Endangered Species Act, incidental takes are also regulated under that act and are not authorized. **All** MMPA category fisheries are liable for incidentally taking ESA listed species.

Please reference [http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/pdfs/esa\\_factsheet.pdf](http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/pdfs/esa_factsheet.pdf) for a list of marine mammals currently listed under the ESA (you should periodically check with the National Marine Fisheries Service for any changes in listed species). Under the ESA, take means to “harass, harm, pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture, or collect, or to attempt to engage in any such conduct.” 16U.S.C. 1532(19); and harass means an “intentional or negligent act or omission which creates the likelihood of injury to the wildlife by annoying it to such an extent as to significantly disrupt normal behavioral patterns which include, but are not limited to, breeding, feeding, or sheltering.” (50 C.F.R. 17.3).

To reduce the possibility of incidentally taking an ESA listed species and its associated liability ADF&G recommends that:

- Fishermen participating in area fisheries remain vigilant in monitoring gear when marine mammals may be present.
- Fishermen use avoidance measures (e.g., not fishing or relocating fishing activities when marine mammals are present or likely to be present) to minimize interactions with marine mammals.
- Avoid fishing in areas where marine mammals are likely to be present at night or when visibility or weather conditions make it difficult to spot marine mammals.

For further questions concerning marine mammal regulations call NMFS at 907-271-5006.